

REMARKS

The Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for thoroughly reviewing and considering the pending application. The Office Action dated August 19, 2004 has been received and carefully reviewed. Claims 1, 12 and 23 have been amended. Claims 1-30 are currently pending. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Initially, the Applicant would like to thank Examiner Mutschler for speaking with the Applicant's representative on September 29, 2004.

The Office Action rejected claims 1-30 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by WO 99/26763. In addition, claims 1-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated U.S. Patent No. 6,629,883 to *Katsuoka et al.* During the telephonic conference, the Applicant's representative and Examiner Mutschler discussed the outstanding rejections and the above claim amendments. In particular, the Examiner agreed that, as amended, claims 1-30 are allowable over the cited references.

Accordingly, the Applicant believes the application is in a condition for allowance and favorable action is respectfully solicited. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the

Application No.: 09/931,695
Amendment dated October 5, 2004
Reply to Office Action dated August 19, 2004

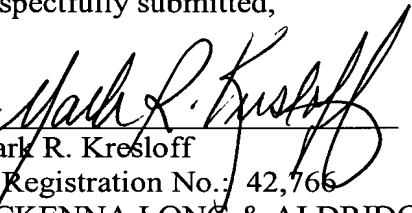
Docket No.: 9323.051.00-US

filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Dated: October 5, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

By


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